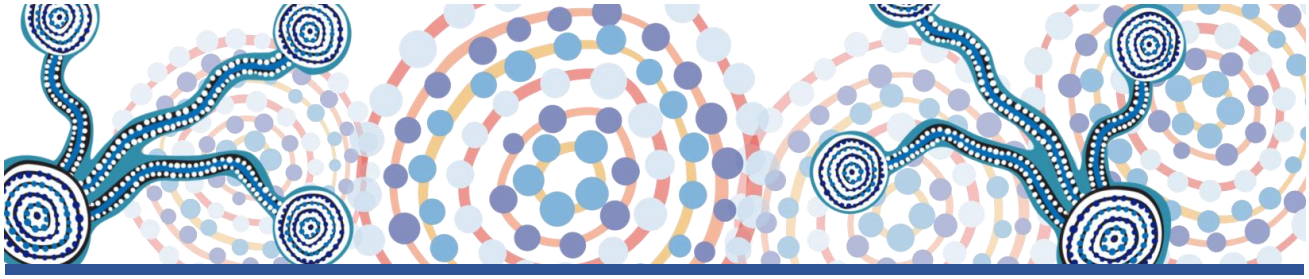


TOUR PRESENTATION

Living on the edge of ancient history: improving the health of Lake Clifton and its thrombolites through community stewardship

Steve Fisher and Karen Bettink, Peel Harvey Catchment Council

Abstract

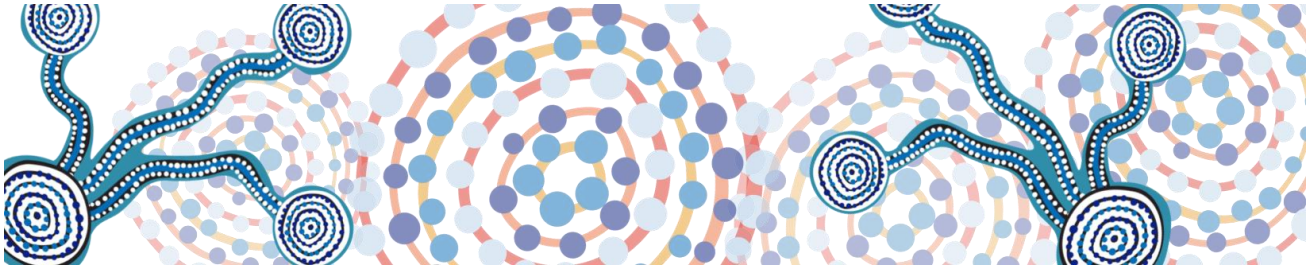
Lake Clifton is a critical part of the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar Site, being one of the few places on earth thrombolites, or ancient living rock-like structures, are found. At 2000 years old these thrombolites and their ancestors provide a window into evolution of life on Earth. They are one of the key species and communities directly responsible for the Peel-Yalgorup site being recognised as a Ramsar-listed wetland of international importance, yet face a multitude of threats and are listed as a Critically Endangered Ecological Community or TEC.

Protecting the lake's thromobiltes, and other local threatened species and ecological communities presents significant challenges. The Catchment includes parts of the Yalgorup National Park, as well as over 300 rural residential properties, where threats to the lake's values include increasing nutrient levels, increasing salinity, decreasing freshwater inflows from groundwater, and weed infestations.

To improve the health and resilience of the Catchment, Peel Harvey Catchment Council established the 2018-2022 Lake Clifton Catchment Conservation Stewardship Program. Built on the platform and learnings, the Stewardship Program partners with local Government Authorities, Birdlife Australia, Landcare, DBCA and individual landholders to build stewardship and support landowners to implement management practices that improve landscape health and resilience.

Through regular contact and a variety of support mechanisms, the program works directly with the catchment's 300 land managers to raise awareness, improve management and restoration of native vegetation and wildlife habitats. Project activities and services include newsletters and media, free site and habitat assessments, annual plant giveaways, events and access to grant funding for onground works. The Land for Wildlife voluntary conservation program is included in the project to encourage long-term community support and action for conservation.

This presentation will discuss how these ancient living rocks formed, their evolutionary role, the threats they currently face and how stewardship is helping their survival.



Acknowledgement

Steve Fisher and Karen Bettink acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and pays respects to their Elders past and present.

PHCC also wishes to thank the City of Mandurah and Shire of Waroona for their ongoing support of the program.

Speaker Profile

Steve Fisher has a PhD in Chemistry from Curtin University where he specialised in Petroleum and Environmental Organic Geochemistry. Steve has 35 years of experience as a scientist working in academia, private consultancy, at CSIRO and at various state government agencies. He is currently the Operations Manager, Science and Waterways at the Peel–Harvey Catchment Council (PHCC) with his key responsibilities to provide science leadership, better integrate science into the management of the Peel-Harvey waterways and to engage with the community.

Karen Bettink has a background in environmental science, ecology and zoology with a love of nature and all things science. Studying at Murdoch and then completing a PhD in zoology at UWA, she has over 20 years' experience in working in threatened species and communities, catchment management, wetlands and waterways. This experience has been working with landholders, interest groups and communities to apply science to make a positive difference.